

Dear Friend:

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure is crafting a new surface transportation authorization to replace the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which expires on September 30, 2009.

This legislation is a six-year bill that authorizes our nation's surface transportation programs. The majority of the Federal funds in the bill will be allocated by formula with the state departments of transportation, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and local transit agencies determining which projects will be funded. Although the current Federal-state-local partnership has served highway and transit systems well, not all communities are treated equally in the decision making process.

To compliment the work done by these agencies, and to ensure communities are full partners in these important programs, a small percentage of the overall investment of the authorization bill will be available for Member-designated High Priority Projects. To ensure the transportation needs of New Mexico's First Congressional District are addressed with the investment provided in the authorization legislation, my office is accepting requests for High Priority Projects.

At this point it is not certain that High Priority Projects will be included in the final bill as there are many unknown factors as to what funding level we may be able to provide for the overall bill. We are currently faced with a very low budget number for surface transportation programs and while the Committee is planning to include Member-designated High Priority Projects in the final authorization legislation, that could very well change if we cannot find ways to generate sufficient revenue to invest in our country's critical surface transportation infrastructure needs.

Please understand that resources are limited and the needs of our communities may be greater than the resources available. I will likely be unable to ask for funding for all project requests made of my office. Because resources are so limited, if you request more than one High Priority Project you must rank them in priority order.

The deadline for High Priority Project requests to my congressional office is *no later than* 6:00 pm Tuesday, April 28th. Please fill out the attached project request form and e-mail it - along with at least one local or state letter of support for the project - to nm01appropriations@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

MARTIN HEINRICH
Member of Congress